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1903







# History *of* the Gable Family

Compiled by Frank Allaben for Percival K. Gable,  
Proprietor of the Rambo House, Norristown, Penna.



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the Gable Family







Percival K. Gable, Proprietor of the Rambo House, Norristown, Pa.

PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN IN 1906







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**PERCIVAL KEMERER GABLE**, born at Skippackville, Pa., Feb. 27, 1861, proprietor of the Valley House, as subsequently of the Hartranft Hotel, Appledare, Atlantic City, N. J., the Central House, Lansdale, Pa.



## The Gable Family



If the handing down of an occupation from father to son through generations makes one an expert in a certain, special line, then the present descendants of the Gable family should be Princes of Hotel-Keepers, for the family is one of the oldest in the county, and the name has figured conspicuously in connection with the hotel business for more than a century. It is also found in the early annals of the state in connection with the transfer of property and the recording of deeds, which indicates that they were land-owners, and belonged to the same class which constitutes the substantial citizenship of a community.

It is definitely known that all of the Gables in America do not trace their ancestry to one source, for there is authentic record of the arrival of Peter and Maria Gabele in 1732; of Hendrick Gaabell a little later in the same year; of Conrad Gable in 1738; of John Philip and Johan Frederick Gabel, brothers, in 1739; Anthony Gabel in 1751; John Peter Gable in 1752; Philip Henry and Sebastian Gabel in 1753; Johannes Gabel in 1754; and Conrad Gabel in 1773. Various differences in the orthography of the name appear, as there does in the place of location of these various emigrants to the American shores.

It is to Johan Philip Gabel that the branch of the Gable family under consideration traces its ancestry. John Philip Gabel was a son of Johan Jacob and Maria Margaret Gabel, who were residents of Rabach, in Zweibreucken, the Pfalz, Germany. There the son was born in 1698, was there reared, was married in 1735, and in 1739 came to America. He sailed on the ship "Samuel" from Rotterdam, Captain Hugh Percy in command of the vessel, and eventually landed safely at Philadelphia. He was accompanied by his brother, Johan Frederick Gabel, and the original ship list gives the age of the former, on August 27, 1739, as forty-one years, and that of the younger brother as thirty-seven. John Philip Gabel settled in Upper Salford township, Montgomery county, Pennsylvania,

where he soon became recognized as a prominent and influential citizen. He was chosen an officer in the Old Goshenhoppen Church, being in 1774 one of the four who signed for the Lutheran congregation a joint contract with the Reformed congregation for the occupation of the church, built jointly in that year. He is mentioned among the taxpayers of Upper Salford township, Montgomery county, in 1769, as the owner of one hundred acres of land, and his name appears among the taxpayers of 1774, where he is recorded as "Philip Gabel, Sr.", in order to distinguish him from his son of the same name. As his name does not appear in the tax list of 1779, it is evident that he must have died between 1774 and 1779, and was at least seventy-six years of age at the time of his death. His wife, Elizabeth Catherine Gabel, was a daughter of Heinrich and Maria Barbara Culman, and was born in Greselbach, Hernbasch, Germany, August 13, 1705. She became the wife of John Philip Gabel in 1735, and with two infant sons, Johan Frederick and Johan Peter, accompanied her husband to America. Their other children were Johan Philip; Catherine Elizabeth, born March 15, 1741; Margaret, born June 6, 1743; and Maria Catherine, born November 3, 1744.

Johan Philip Gabel, the emigrant, who landed at Philadelphia, in 1739, was older than his brother, Johan Friederick Gabel, who came over on the same ship, as on the original ship list the age of Philip Gabel (on Aug. 27, 1739), is given as 41, while that of Frederick is given as 37. (Penn Archives, Second Series, Vol. xvii, page 187.) The age of Philip Gabel, in 1739, as given on this ship list, agrees with his date of birth, 1698, as given in the Old Goshenhoppen Church records.

He lived to a good old age, appearing among the taxables of Upper Salford Township, Montgomery county, in 1769, as the owner of 100 acres of land, (Penn Archives, Third Series, Vol. xiv., page 54), and among the taxables of the same township, in 1774, where he is distinguished from his son as "Philip Gable, Sen'r." (Ibid., page 450.) His name does not appear in the tax list of 1779, which is good evidence that he died between 1774 and 1779, at the age of at least 76 years.

Captain John Philip Gabel, born in Upper Salford Township, in 1739, the son of the first John Philip Gabel, was married in the summer of 1766 to his wife, Margaret. This we learn from his tombstone, which states that he "lived 36 years in wedlock, and 5½ years as a widower," or

a total of 41½ years after his marriage, which reckoned back from the date of his death, January 18, 1808, fixes the date of his marriage about July, 1766.

The tombstone of his wife states that she died September 5, 1802, aged 77 years, 9 months and 5 days, which fixes the date of her birth as Nov. 30, 1724. Captain Philip Gabel was her second husband. Her first husband, to whom she was married November 19, 1745, was Killian Gouckler, and her parents were "Nicol Bittel," and his wife, Maria Elizabeth. (Old Goshenhoppen Lutheran Church Records, page 41.) By her first husband she had eight children—John, George, John Michael, Mary Elizabeth, Catherine, John Nicholas, Anna Margaret, Christina Barbara and John Gouckle. In his will, made July 15, 1765, and proved Sept. 9, 1765, (Wills, Philadelphia, Book N, page 393), Kilian Gouckler mentions all these children, and his wife, Anna Margaret, whom he nominates as his executrix.

By her second husband, Captain Philip Gabel, to whom she was married, about July, 1766, she had one child, John Philip Gabel, 3d, born July 29, 1768. (See his tombstone and also page 251, of the Old Goshenhoppen Lutheran Church Record.)

Kilian Gouckler, at the time of his death, was the owner of 290 acres of land, on a part of which the Old Gable house, in Upper Salford, now stands. This tract is referred to as 280 acres in Gouckler's will. But after the Gouckler estate became the property of Captain Philip Gable, through his marriage to the widow of Kilian Gouckler and the purchase of the interest of the other heirs, it was re-surveyed and found to contain 290 acres, as appears from a draught and memorandum of the re-survey for Philip Gable, now in the possession of Mr. P. K. Gable.

Prior to 1757, 260 acres of the Gouckler-Gable estate belonged to "Jacob Nuss, late of Upper Salford township, in the County of Philadelphia," as an old deed, in the possession of Mr. P. K. Gable, recites; and this property, "a Certain Messuage or Tenement Plantation and two hundred and sixty acres of land situate in Salford Township," under a court writ dated March 8, 1757, was seized by James Coultas, High Sheriff of Philadelphia County, to satisfy a debt of £442, 1 shilling and 6 pence, owed by Jacob Nuss to Adam Clampffer, was bought at public sale by William Clampffer, of Philadelphia, and transferred to him February 28, 1758, by the Deed-Poll of the Sheriff, now in the possession of

Mr. P. K. Gable, from which the above history of the property is extracted.

On March 9, 1758, William Clampffer sold the property to Kilian Gouckler, with some additions, making 285 acres. (Original deed now in possession of Mr. P. K. Gable.) Upon re-survey, as stated above, it was found to contain 290 acres.

Captain Philip Gable also owned land adjoining that which he subsequently obtained from the Gouckler estate, as we learn from a deed of two tracts owned by Michael Reyer, one of which is described as "by late Christopher Hanckabrand, now Philip Gabel, the younger's land." (Deeds, Norristown, Book 3, page 238.) On Nov. 9, 1778, he bought for £1,950 "a Certain Messuage or Tenement and Lot, Piece or Tract of Land, Situate on the South Side of Main Street, in Germantown," in the deed for which he is described as "Philip Gabel, of Upper Salford Township, Inn-keeper." (Deeds, Philadelphia, Book D, No. 1, page 297.) On April 7, 1794, this Germantown property was sold by "Philip Gabel, of Upper Salford Township, late of Philadelphia County, but since the Division now in the County of Montgomery and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Inn-keeper, and Margaret, his wife." (Deeds, Philadelphia, Book D 43, page 229.)

It is probable that the old Gable house was built by Kilian Gouckler, if not by the preceding owner, Jacob Nuss, and that Gouckler kept the place as a tavern, as Captain Philip Gable afterwards did. Thus, in his will, he describes himself as "Kylvian Goukler, of Upper Salford, . . . In-holder." (Wills, Philadelphia, Book N, page 393.) The tradition, which has come down in the Gable family is that the house was built either two years before or two years after the first church building of Old Goshenhoppen, which would make the date of erection of the old Gable house either 1742 or 1746.

Captain Philip Gable evidently acquired the Gouckler property in two or three transactions. In the tax list of 1769, for Upper Salford, Philadelphia county, he is assessed for 150 acres of land, 4 horses, 6 cattle and 1 servant. (Penn Archives, Third Series, Vol. xiv., page 54.) In the list for 1774 he is taxed for 260 acres, 4 horses, 4 cattle and 1 servant. (Ibid, page 405.) In the list of 1780 his estate for purposes of taxation is valued at £5,050. (Penn. Archives, Third Series, Vol. xv., page 551.) In the assessment for 1781 he is referred to as "Philip Gable, tavern



keep'r," (Ibid., Vol. xvi., page 41); while in that of 1783 he is taxed for 285 acres of land, 4 horses, 4 cattle and 8 sheep. (Ibid., page 703.)

He was Captain of a Company of the First Battalion of Philadelphia County Militia, commanded by Colonel Daniel Heester, or Heister, during the Revolution, six lists of the men of "Capt. Philip Gable's Company," of this Battalion, who paid fines for the days they were off duty appearing on pages 581-2, 595-6, 625-6, 633-4, 683-4, and 693-4 of Volume V, of the Third Series of Pennsylvania Archives.

All the Gabels in America are not descended from the brothers, John Philip and John Frederick Gabel, who came over in 1739. A "Peter Gabele" and "Maria Gabele" came over in 1732, a "Hendrick Gabel" a little later in the same year, a "Conrad Gable" in 1738, an "Anthony Gaubel" in 1751, "Johan Peter Gable" in 1752, "Philip Henry Gabel" and "Sebastian Gabel" in 1753, "Johannes Gabel" in 1754 and "Conrad Gabel" in 1773. (Penn. Archives, Second Series, Vol. xvii., pages 48, 62, 63, 162, 329, 353, 384, 438 and 505.)

FRANK ALLABEN.



## Family Bible Records

The following is from the family Bible of Jesse Gable, now in possession of Mrs. Aaron H. Harley, of Philadelphia. The records are in the handwriting of Jesse Gable, until his death, and the few added since that date are said to be in the handwriting of the daughter, Caroline Gable, now deceased:

Jesse Gable, son of Philip Gable and Catharine, his wife, was born December 29, 1815; was married to Mary Kemmerer, June 18, 1843, and died Sept. 16, 1874.

Mary Kemmerer, (his wife), the daughter of Jacob Kemmerer, and Susan, his wife, was born Jan. 27, 1821, and died Sept. 27, 1896.

They had the following children:

1. John Philip Gable, son of Jesse and Mary Gable, born Jan. 17, 1844, and died Oct. 9, 1857.
2. Oliver Gable, born March 3, 1845, and died May 22, 1852.
3. Caroline Gable, born Oct. 27, 1846, and died Oct. 1st, 1896.
4. Catharine Ann Gable, born May 17, 1849, and died March 24, 1852.
5. Jesse Gable, born July 14, 1851, and died Feb. 28, 1853.
6. Mary Gable, born July 14, 1851, (she and Jesse were twins), and now (1903) living in Philadelphia. [She married Dec. 31, 1872, Aaron H. Harley, proprietor of the Farmers' Hotel, 1802 Ridge avenue, Philadelphia, who was born Oct. 30, 1849, at Fairview, Montgomery county, Pa., the son of Matthias J. Harley. The following six children of Mary Gable and Aaron H. Harley, are all living in 1903: (1), Mary Agnes Harley, born April 20, 1877, who married, first, Wm. Gotwals, by whom she had a son, William Edward Gotwalts, living in 1903, and married, second, Harvey Houck, her present husband., by whom she has a son, Aaron Harley Houck; (2), Sarah Lavinia Harley, born March 15, 1880;

(3), Caroline Gable Harley, born June 21, 1883; (4), Elsie Irene Harley, born Jan. 10, 1886; (5), Matthias Johnson Harley, born Dec. 17, 1890; and (6), Marguerite Edith Harley, born July 24, 1894.]

7. Emma Louisa Gable, born April 30, 1853, and died Dec. 15, 1881, never having married.

8. Rosa Gable, born Dec. 19, 1854, and now living (1903) in Norristown, Pa. [She married, Nov. 9, 1878, Hiram Pierce Beerer, born at Jeffersonville, Montgomery county, Pa., the son of Joseph Beerer and Elizabeth Kline. Rosa Gable and Hiram Pierce Beerer have had the following two children: (1), Walter Gable Beerer, born Sept. 11, 1879, and died Sept. 9, 1880; and (2), Joseph Gable Beerer, born Feb. 17, 1884, and living in 1903.]

9. Elizabeth Gable, born Oct. 18, 1856, and died June 23, 1857.

10. Allen Nelson Gable, born April 5, 1858, and died June 29, 1860.

11. Percival Kemmerer Gable, born Feb. 27, 1860, and now (1903) living in Norristown, proprietor of the Rambo House.

12. Charles Gable, born May 18, 1863, and died Oct. 26, 1863.

Transcribed from the Jesse Gable Bible Register, Sept. 4, 1903, with some facts added from the family records or personal knowledge of Mrs. Mary Gable Harley and Mrs. Rosa Gable Beerer.

FRANK ALLABEN.



## The Gable Signatures



The three signatures on the opposite page, (fac-similes of the originals, obtained by a tracing upon tracing paper over carbon paper), are in the order of their positions on the page, the autographs, respectively, of Philip Gabel, 1st, who came to America in August, 1739, of Philip Gabel, 2d born in America, in October, 1739, and of Philip Gabel, or Gable, 3d, born in 1768, the grandson of the first Philip and son of the second.

This autograph of the first Philip, the only one known to exist, appears on the second page of the Treasurer's book of the Old Goshenhoppen Lutheran Congregation, begun in 1771, among several autographs of signers who thus attested their approval of accounts closed up on May 27, 1773. The second signature, "Philip Gabel, Jun.," appears in the same list; and as the 3d Philip was not born until 1768, we know that the two signatures of 1773 are those of the 1st and 2d Philips. That of the 2d Philip appears repeatedly on subsequent pages of the book, and later on the signature of the 3d Philip Gable appears frequently. The copy opposite is signed to an account dated June 3, 1809, his father, the 2d Philip, having died January 18, 1808.

The two last signatures, Jesse Gabel and P. K. Gable, are those of father and son, the former the great-grandson and the latter the great-great-grandson of the original Philip Gabel.

FRANK ALLABEN.

NOTE.—The signatures of the 1st and 2d Philip Gabel give the German spelling of the family name, "Gabel," while the 3d Philip gives the English phonetic equivalent, "Gable." The 2d Philip wrote his name both ways. In the old German records of Alt Goschenhoppen Kirche, his autograph everywhere appears in German, but in his old Ledger (Ledger "M,") now in the possession of his great-grandson, Mr. Per-



cival K. Gable, he kept all his accounts in most beautiful English, translating all the German surnames into their phonetic equivalent in English. His own family name here appears always as "Gable." A careful study of this Ledger, and comparison of it with his autograph in German, leaves no doubt that the Ledger was the work of his own pen, and that he had the intelligence to perfect himself in English penmanship rather than in German, and so attain to the commanding position he enjoyed in the community as an intermediary between the German settlers and the English of Colonial Pennsylvania.

The memorandum on the inside front cover of the Ledger, under date, April 6, 1762, is in German script, and in the same hand as the German autograph of the 2d Philip Gabel, while the name above this memorandum, "Martin Spring Bucker," is in the elegant English script, which appears throughout the Ledger. In the same German hand is also the line on the inside back cover, dated March 12, 1761, and cancelled by numerous pen-strokes through it. Again, throughout the Ledger, the itemized accounts, under the boldly and beautifully written surnames, are in much smaller script than the latter, and though in neat English, this, here and there (and very frequently), tends to revert to so close a kinship with the German autograph as to leave no doubt as to the authorship.

The proficiency of the English language and penmanship exhibited by Philip Gabel, 2d, as revealed to us in this book, need occasion no surprise. The first Philip Gabel was a man of intelligence and commanding position, as is evidenced by the fact that he was one of four chosen to represent his church congregation in an important connection in 1744, only five years after he had reached America. Though his son, Philip, 2d, was born in the, then, wilderness of Upper Salford Township, there was no difficulty in giving him the excellent education he evidently enjoyed. He was probably tutored by some of the early pastors of the Old Goshenhoppen Church, some of whom were finely educated and proficient in Latin and Hebrew (and probably Greek), as well as in English and German, as the Old Goshenhoppen Church records, kept by them, demonstrate.

Moreover, fine penmanship appears to have been an accomplishment of the Gabel family, in every generation, as a consultation of the records left by them discloses.

Philip Gable

Philip Gable Jr

Philip Gable

Jose Gable

R. Gable.



A further proof that the Ledger is in the hand of the second Philip Gabel is found in entries which would be unnatural, in their use of the personal pronoun; if by a book-keeper or any hand save that of the proprietor of the business. The following credits are a few samples: "By soling a pair of shoes for my man," opposite p. 37; "Settled Wth Mich: Cressler Ball: due me," opp. p. 41; "By a bond signd: to me due on Elias Snider for £12; but allowd it to me for £11," opp. p. 51; Ballance due me," opp. p. 68; "By tobacco Bot: for me," opp. p. 166; "By eve my makes accot.", opp. p. 194, By a jacoat made for my wife," opp. p. 228; "By 1 pair shoes for me. 95; By 1 pair D's for my child, 35," opp. p. 136. etc. The last item was no doubt for shoes for his infant son, Philip Gable, 3d, born in 1768. Its date is Oct. 2d, 1769. This Ledger has been handed down in the Gable family to its present owner.







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